

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently amended) A positioning tip 10 ~~for the stable positioning of~~ a distal end portion 2a of an artificial joint stem 2 into a bone canal 4 and ~~for~~ guiding the distal end portion 2a of the stem so as not to make direct contact with ~~the~~ an inner surface of the bone canal 4 when the artificial joint stem 2 is inserted therein ~~into the bone canal~~, the positioning tip 10 ~~including means for mounting the tip~~ mounted on a cementless artificial joint stem 2 at a position near the distal end portion 2a of the stem such that an outer circumferential surface of the positioning tip 10 faces the inner surface of the bone canal 4, the improvement wherein said positioning tip 10 is made of a biodegradable and absorbable material and wherein said positioning tip 10 includes means for mounting the positioning tip 10 at the position near the distal end portion 2a of the stem, wherein the means for mounting the positioning tip is at a position that is offset from the center axis of the positioning tip.

9. (Previously presented) The positioning tip according to claim 8, wherein the positioning tip has a diameter, in horizontal section, which is larger than the diameter of the horizontal section of the stem at a position near the distal end portion of the stem, and wherein the means for mounting the tip on a cementless artificial joint stem is selected from the group consisting of a fitting hole extending axially through the positioning tip, a fitting protrusion, and a screw that fits with the distal end portion of the stem.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Withdrawn) The distal tip for positioning an artificial joint stem according to claim 9, wherein the mounting means of the distal tip is a fitting hole which has a projection or a ridge that protrudes from the inner circumferential surface toward the center of the fitting hole.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously presented) The positioning tip according to claim 8, wherein the positioning tip has an outer circumference in the shape of a polygon or other uneven shape other than a circle.

14. (Previously presented) The positioning tip according to claim 9, wherein the positioning tip has an outer circumference in the shape of a polygon or other uneven shape other than a circle.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Withdrawn) The distal tip for the positioning of artificial joint stem according to claim 11, wherein the distal tip has an outer circumference in the shape of a polygon or other uneven shape other than a circle.

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17. (Canceled)

18. (Withdrawn) The distal tip for positioning an artificial joint stem according to claim 8, wherein the stem comprises a plurality of mounting holes disposed in spaced relation along its circumference near the distal end thereof, and wherein the distal tip comprises a plurality of pins inserted into the mounting holes.

19. (Withdrawn) The distal tip for the positioning of artificial joint stem according to claim 18, wherein the distal tips have different lengths so that projecting length of the distal tip is different along the circumference when a plurality of distal tips are mounted at appropriate intervals along the circumference of the stem of the artificial joint near the distal end thereof.